

1 AN ACT relating to higher education student assistance.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
3 represented in the General Assembly:

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Illinois Opportunity Scholarship Act.

6 Section 5. Creation of program. The Illinois  
7 Opportunity Scholarship Program is hereby created under which  
8 scholarships are to be awarded annually, beginning with the  
9 2004-2005 academic year.

10 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

11 "Regular undergraduate program" means an academic program  
12 of study in an institution of higher education at or below  
13 the baccalaureate level leading to either a certificate,  
14 nursing diploma, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree.

15 "Institution of higher education" means an institution of  
16 higher learning as defined in Section 10 of the Higher  
17 Education Student Assistance Act or an eligible institution  
18 that is accredited by accrediting agencies which are  
19 recognized by the United States Secretary of Education.

20 Section 15. Program administration. The Illinois  
21 Opportunity Scholarship Program shall be administered by the  
22 Illinois Student Assistance Commission, which shall publicize  
23 the availability of scholarships under the program. All  
24 applications for scholarships to be awarded under this Act  
25 shall be made to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission  
26 in a form prescribed by the Commission, and shall be  
27 accompanied by such supporting documents as the Commission  
28 requires to determine the scholarship eligibility of  
29 applicants.

1           Section 20. Exclusivity. A recipient of an Illinois  
2 Opportunity Scholarship may not hold any other scholarship  
3 that is funded by any public funds of the State or awarded  
4 under any other financial assistance program administered by  
5 the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

6           Section 25. Scholarship eligibility. Each recipient of  
7 an Illinois Opportunity Scholarship shall:

8           (1) be accepted for admission in the regular  
9 undergraduate program at an institution of higher education  
10 or be enrolled in a 2-year associate degree program in the  
11 State and in which the course work is acceptable for transfer  
12 credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an  
13 institution of higher education;

14           (2) be a resident of the State;

15           (3) earn a cumulative grade point average after the  
16 first semester of his or her senior year of at least 3.0 on a  
17 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in core curriculum courses as  
18 calculated and indicated on the recipient's high school  
19 transcript from a high school in this State;

20           (4) begin his or her education at an institution of  
21 higher education within one year of completing high school  
22 or, failing to do so, provide evidence satisfactory to the  
23 Illinois Student Assistance Commission of extenuating  
24 circumstances;

25           (5) be under the age of 22 years at the time of  
26 receiving the first year of a scholarship award under this  
27 Act;

28           (6) have successfully completed a college preparatory  
29 program in high school;

30           (7) enroll in an institution of higher education as a  
31 full-time student;

32           (8) have an annual total family income of \$60,000 or  
33 below;

- 1           (9) accept any other conditions attached to the award;  
2 and  
3           (10) satisfy any additional criteria the Illinois  
4 Student Assistance Commission reasonably may establish.

5           Section 30. Scholarship amount. A scholarship provided  
6 under the Illinois Opportunity Scholarship Program shall be  
7 equal to the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for a  
8 full-time undergraduate student at the institution of higher  
9 education at which the scholarship recipient enrolls, not to  
10 exceed the equivalent expense for a full-time undergraduate,  
11 in-state student at the University of Illinois at  
12 Champaign-Urbana, plus a \$200 book allowance.

13           Section 35. Use of scholarships. An Illinois  
14 Opportunity Scholarship may be used at any institution of  
15 higher education or at a hospital diploma school in the State  
16 for training registered nurses, if the curriculum is approved  
17 by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

18           Section 40. Scholarship terms. Subject to the  
19 provisions of Section 20, each recipient of an Illinois  
20 Opportunity Scholarship may hold the award for 4 years if the  
21 recipient:

- 22           (1) continues to be a resident of the State;  
23           (2) continues to be a full-time student at an  
24 institution of higher education and takes at least 12  
25 semester hours of courses each semester or its equivalent as  
26 determined by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission;  
27           (3) upon completion of the recipient's freshman year,  
28 has achieved a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0  
29 on a 4.0 scale and maintains this minimum cumulative grade  
30 point average throughout the remainder of the award, or  
31 failing to do so, provides evidence satisfactory to the

1 Illinois Student Assistance Commission of extenuating  
2 circumstances;

3 (4) in the judgment of the institution of higher  
4 education in which the recipient is enrolled, is making  
5 satisfactory progress toward a degree; and

6 (5) maintains the standards of the institution of higher  
7 education in which the recipient is enrolled.

8 Notwithstanding the forgoing provisions of this Section, a  
9 recipient of an Illinois Opportunity Scholarship who is  
10 enrolled in an associate degree program of an institution of  
11 higher education may hold the award for 3 years if the  
12 conditions set forth in paragraphs (1) through (5) of this  
13 Section are met.

14 Section 45. Report of awards. On or before May 1 of  
15 each year, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission shall  
16 send each member of the General Assembly a list of the  
17 individuals in each legislative district to whom Illinois  
18 Opportunity Scholarships are awarded.

19 Section 50. Payment of scholarships. Subject to a  
20 separate appropriation made for purposes of this Act,  
21 scholarship awards shall be paid and distributed by the  
22 Illinois Student Assistance Commission in accordance with  
23 rules and regulations that the Commission shall promulgate to  
24 administer the provisions of the Illinois Opportunity  
25 Scholarship Program.

26 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on  
27 January 1, 2004.